GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1160
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2015
CONSERVATION OF TAJ MAHAL
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Taj Mahal is getting discoloured due to pollution;

(b) if so, the details of pollutants causing such impact; and

(c) the details of the steps taken/being taken by the Government to protect the Taj Mahal and to conserve its original features?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) & (b) The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has not conducted any research/study on Taj Mahal getting discoloured. However, according to a recently published research paper, the Taj Mahal is getting discoloured due to adverse impact of air pollution. The research paper published in the journal of Environmental Science and Technology, along with Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, United States, IIT Kanpur and Archaeological Survey of India (Science Branch), Delhi, reported that; am- bient particulate matter (PM) contains relatively high concentration of light absorbing particles that could potentially discolour the Taj Mahal marble surfaces, include black carbon (BC), light absorbing organic carbon (brown carbon, BrC), and dust. Analyses of particles deposited to marble surrogate surfaces at the Taj Mahal indicate that a large fraction of the outer Taj Mahal surfaces are covered with particles that contain both carbonaceous components and dust.

(c) For the protection of Taj Mahal, following measures interalia have been taken for Improvement of air quality of Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ) area are as follows:

Closure of coal based Thermal Power Generation Plants;
Prohibition of establishment / expansion of air polluting industries;
Closure of coal/coke based industries at Agra and closure of polluting industries except those equipped with adequate Pollution Control Systems in TTZ;
Closure of about 450 Brick kilns within TTZ ;
Supply of ultra-low sulphur diesel to vehicles;
Restriction on plying of petrol, diesel driven vehicles around 500 m of Taj Mahal;
Plying of Battery operated Buses and other vehicles within 500 m of Taj Mahal, and also in Agra City;
Use of Gas/ Eco- friendly fuel by Industries of Agra ;

Further, the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board has prepared comprehensive Action Plan which includes city gas network for Vehicles/ domestic sector/hotels/industries etc, installation of automatic traffic lights & signals at the main crossings of Agra City, massive plantation, phasing out of old vehicles, up-gradation of PUC system, bypassing transit traffic, strengthening of air quality monitoring network, management of Municipal Solid Waste & Bio Medical Wastes etc. The above Action Plan is being implemented and the progress is being reviewed periodically by Taj Trapezium Zone Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority Agra.